

Testimony of Scott R. Schoem, MD, MBA, FAAP, President, Connecticut Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics on SB 367 *An Act Concerning Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems and Vapor Products*

March 23, 2022

Senator Abrams, Representative Steinberg and esteemed members of the Public Health Committee:

My name is Dr. Scott R. Schoem. I am a pediatric otolaryngologist (ENT) and the current President of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and a past-President of the Connecticut ENT Society. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in favor of banning all flavored vaping/electronic delivery systems.

There is well established evidence demonstrating the dangers of vaping, including inhalation of unregulated, harmful substances such as heavy metals, volatile organic compounds and cancer causing chemicals. In addition, “open” vaping systems allow for addition of even more harmful substances than “closed” systems. The nicotine content in 1 vape cartridge is 2-5 times higher than in a conventional cigarette leading to quick and profound nicotine addiction.

To promote this addiction, the vaping product industry has specifically targeted middle and high school students by enticing them with flavored vape products. This is why the most popular vape products contain fruit flavors, candy, mint and menthol. A study in *Pediatrics* (Dec 2019) showed that 93.8% of middle and high school students who vape use these flavored products. For way too long, the vape product industry has been unregulated and uncontrolled with rapidly rising and alarming levels of nicotine addiction among our youth. The FDA only gained authorization by Congress to regulate vape products starting in 2016. By then, the vape industry was already way ahead in development and marketing. By 2019, the Youth Tobacco Survey estimated that 1 in 10 ninth grade students and 1 in 5 twelfth grade students report used vape products regularly. Clearly, we must stop and reverse this trend.

Even if we ban sale of flavored vape products in brick & mortar stores, the online e-commerce sales will continue and probably increase substantially. Therefore, online sales of flavored vape products would also have to be deemed illegal. And, only a regional, multi-state approach would be successful to prevent widespread cross state border sales. This is a substantial challenge. However, if we do not start now, many more youths will become addicted to nicotine products leading to lifelong health problems.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions at sschoem@connecticutchildrens.org